

vel and research, no obstacle seems sufficiently great to present an insuperable impediment to the cherished object. Neither the chilling influence of the north, nor the relaxing climate of the south, the fathomless depths of the Atlantic ocean, nor the pathless waste of the sandy desert, the knife of the savage, nor the still surer chance of pestilence and fever can deter the adventurer from his noble but hazardous purpose.

Great is the debt of gratitude the world owes to the noble-minded men who have thus devoted their best years and energies to the sublime task of elucidating the mysteries of the past, who have boldly risked their safety and their fortune upon the chance of unfolding the page of knowledge to their less adventurous, less inspired countrymen at home.

Exactly one century has elapsed since Messrs. Stuart and Revett conceived, at Rome, the idea of undertaking an architectural crusade to the mother of elegance, art, and refinement.—the city whose treasures of form and proportion, though reported and known to exist from the imperfect accounts of the few and unqualified travellers who had visited her, yet were almost chimerical to the existing world of letters,—the city, whose style of architecture, though understood to be the parent of that of ancient Rome, and germ of those of all the modern nations of the world, was but imperfectly known as to its real proportions and actual characteristics,—the city that gave birth to the wisdom of a Solon, the devotion of a Miltiades, the virtues of an Aristides, the ill-requited merits of a Cimon, and the elegance, policy, and splendour of a Pericles; the birth-place of Phidias, Ictinus, and Praxiteles; the parent of Socrates and Demosthenes, Xenophon and Plato, Sophocles and Thucydides,—Athens!

The achievement of this most interesting proposal, forms an important era in the annals of modern architecture. A new and superior system of proportion was to supersede the adaptations of that of ancient Rome, which, with few exceptions, had been the prevailing style following the Revival.

About the same period, Messrs. Woods and Dawkins published their excellent work upon the Ruins of Baalbec and Palmyra,—the ancient Heliopolis and Tadmor of Syria, whose gigantic remains for ages unnoticed and unknown, had only served as inclosures for the rude huts of the ignorant and wouder-struck natives.

The rubicon thus passed, the bright example has been followed up by numbers of zealous and skilful artists, whose labours have enriched the treasury of knowledge with spoils from all quarters of the globe.

Assyria, in her vast and imperishable foundations, seat of the once proudest monarchies of the world, but now so fallen that the site of some of her mightiest cities can hardly be ascertained: Egypt, in her pyramids, her temples, her obelisks, and her hieroglyphics, imposing memorials of her Pharaohs and her Ptolemies, for two thousand years enshrouded in a dense darkness which wrapped in mystery her time-worn monuments, ancient people, religion, arts, history, and dominion, till the cannon and genius of Napoleon burst the chain that closed the volume of the past, and by promoting the production of the superb "Description de l'Egypte," paved the way for the labours of Denon, Letronne, Champollion, and many others; Greece, in her temples, statues, and altars, of sublime proportion, whose sacred ruins in Italy, Sicily, and Asia Minor vie with those of the mother country in interest and high excellence; each and all of these have furnished ample matter for the deep research of the scholar and enthusiast.

Italy, cradle of the arts, undying source of poetry and music, painting, sculpture, and architecture,—within whose sacred realms are centred the springs of refinement and civilization,—to whose classic cities and azure skies a yearly crowd of ardent and aspiring artists, from all nations of the globe, flock and throng, that they may drink deep at her fountains of inspiration, inhale the æthereal atmosphere of her genial clime, and gaze with reverence upon her palaces and temples, her paintings and statues,—how wide a field for study does she disclose! Tu cany and the Papal States, the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians, will present the traces, in gigantic

foundations, of the cities that flourished ere Rome existed.

The Greek colonies that settled in Sicily and the coast of Italy, and which from their power and splendour obtained for the land of their adoption the name of "Magna," still exhibit numerous fine remains of temples and sculpture, as at Paestum, Agrigentum, Selinus, &c.

Rome, conqueror of the world, once mistress of an extent of dominion, centre of an amount of population and luxury that has never been equalled before or since, presents to the enthusiast a study that is never completed,—a river of delicious inspiration that can never be exhausted. Her treasures form the magic dream of childhood, the burning hope of youth, the brilliant reality of maturity, and the grateful memory of old age. Her temples and basilicas, palaces and theatres, aqueducts, bridges, amphitheatres, and hippodromes, her columned fora and stately arches of triumph, her sculptured capitals and enriched friezes, cornices, and acroteria of porphyry and marble, would seem to be the labour of a life to examine critically and effectually.

But the wonders of art inclosed within the limits of the eternal city alone form but a very small portion of the works of genius and power that owned Rome for mistress and inventor, and whose gigantic ruins, scattered over a large portion of the globe, astound the beholder by their grandeur and extent. The proud monuments of their extended sway and boundless resources, which are scattered through Spain, Italy, Gaul, and Germany, have not been unnoticed by the architectural pilgrim, though numbers of specimens yet remain to be described and illustrated.

Athens herself, in her temple of Jupiter Olympus, and Egypt, in her pillar to the memory of Pompey, add fresh tributes to the munificence of their conqueror. The sacred ground of the Decapolis of Palestine is rich in Roman structures yet to be explored.

Baalbec, once famed for the worship of the sun,—the chancs of ruins of whose gigantic temple, dedicated to that luminary, defied the graphic powers even of a Lamartine to describe,—and Palmyra, hallowed by the memory of Zenobia and Longinus, have been already exhibited to the world by our indefatigable countrymen. The northern coast of Africa, for a length of 600 miles, presents a vast number of important ruins, which have not yet been properly examined, though well known to exist; indeed, to cite the individual cities of note that present ocular proofs of Roman occupation, or to enumerate the most important of those vast constructions that tell of Roman wealth and enterprise, would far exceed the limits of our present intention.*

ALEX. FRED. ASHTON.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

WE doubt very much the statements which have been the round of the papers, that Mr. Barry had submitted a design and estimate for enlarging the National Gallery, and the inferences therefrom deduced that the matter was settled, and therefore avoided quoting them. We have now great gratification in being the first to lay before the public the following

REPORT,

From the Select Committee of the Commons, appointed "to consider of the best mode of providing additional room for works of art given to the public or purchased by means of parliamentary grants," which, with other facts in our possession, shews we were right.

"In considering the matter submitted to their attention, your committee were naturally led to turn their first thoughts to the valuable collection of pictures just presented to the country by Mr. Vernon. They have been gratified to find that temporary accommodation can be at once provided for them within the precincts of the National Gallery itself, although the amount of room, now but barely sufficient for this single purpose, and the early prospect of greater demands upon it, render it most

* Conclusion next week.

* Lord John Russell, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Hume, Viscount Alington, Mr. Gaitburn, Mr. Baring Wall, Mr. Charteris, Earl of Lincoln, Sir Benjamin Hall, Marquis of Granby, Mr. Tufnell, Mr. Wadley, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Vernon Smith, Mr. Banks.

desirable that additional space should be provided as soon as may be possible.

Your committee are unwilling to pass from this topic without recording their sense of the public spirit and considerate liberality which have prompted this living bequest on the part of Mr. Vernon, and they entertain no doubt that the public gratitude will furnish the most powerful incentive for eliciting further instances of munificence similar in kind, as well as the most honourable reward to him who has afforded this noble example. To this end, however, the means of adequate reception seem to be an indispensable requisite.

The likelihood, therefore, of fresh supplies to the National Repository of Art, whether derived from individual generosity, or by gradual purchases from the public funds, renders it advisable that the best mode of dealing with the National Gallery should be promptly taken into consideration. Your committee cannot but regard the present building to be not only deficient in the requisite space, but, whatever may be the merit of particular portions or details, to be also very much wanting in the dignity and elevation due both to its purpose and its site. They have not omitted to consider the question, whether it would be expedient to erect an entirely new building upon another spot, and with this view they gave their attention to the most obvious situations in the metropolis; but, after careful deliberation, they unanimously concurred in the opinion, that taking into account—

The commanding nature of the site occupied by the present building, to which perhaps it would be difficult to find a parallel in our own or any other capital:

Its accessibility, and nearness to the chief thoroughfares, and centres of business, which are fed by what has been described in a well-known phrase as "the fullest tide of human existence;"

The aids to economy, which, without sacrificing the beauty of effect which a new front and additional height may confer on the structure, would be furnished by the rare circumstance of only one ornamental front being rendered necessary from the disposition of the ground, and by the means which are at hand for making use of the whole of the present interior, due regard being paid to the convenience of the Royal Academy in procuring suitable accommodation elsewhere:

The space for further enlargement, which, in the process of time, and concurrently with the exigencies of the collection, might be supplied by occupying the uncovered ground now in the occupation of public establishments, in the rear of the present building.—

For all these combined reasons, without presuming to indicate the precise period for the commencement of such a work, the determination of which may be governed by other considerations, your Committee would recommend that whenever it is undertaken, the enlarged and improved National Gallery should be on the same site as the present; and for the completion of such a work, which ought to be not unworthy of the age, the country, and its own destination, they would gladly see the most eminent talent of the nation invited to compete in designing an appropriate and enduring monument."

September 1, 1848.

BRASS LETTERS ON GLASS.—According to the specification of Mr. J. L. Lamoude, who has secured a patent for cements, for affixing brass letters on panes of glass, the following are his recipes:—First, 15 parts of copal varnish, 5 parts of drying oil, 3 of oil of turpentine, 2 of essence of turpentine, 5 of animal glue, dissolved in a water bath, and 10 parts hydrate of lime.—Second, 15 parts of sandarach and galipot resin varnish, 5 of drying oil, 5 of oil and essence of turpentine mixed; these are first mixed, and then 10 parts of Spanish white and dry white lead are added.—Third, 15 parts of copal varnish and gum lac mixed, 5 parts of drying oil, 3 parts of a solution of caustic house, or gutta percha, 7 parts of tar oil, and 10 parts of Roman cement and plaster of Paris, in powder, mixed.—Fourth, 15 parts of copal varnish and colophane resin, 5 of oil and essence of turpentine, 2 parts isinglass in powder, 3 parts iron filings, or blacksmith's cinders, ground and sifted, and 10 parts of washed earth, ochre, or rotten-stone.